

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-14, 27, and 28 are pending in the present application, claims 15-26, and 29-39 being withdrawn.


The Examiner has alleged that the originally filed claims are directed to three (3) separate patentably distinct species of the claimed invention. More specifically, the Examiner alleges that the originally pending non-withdrawn claims are directed to the patentably distinct species as set forth in claims: (1) 1-14, 27, and 28; (2) 15-26; and (3) 29-39. This assertion by the Examiner and the determined election of species requirement is respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

The Examiner has failed to provide a prima facie case that the alleged grouping of claims set forth patentably distinct species. The Examiner merely makes a statement that the alleged grouping of claims set forth patentably distinct species without any corresponding reasoning or arguments. The mere recitation of a conclusion without underlying evidence or reasoning fails to establish a prima facie case.

In view of the above discussion, the Applicants, elect, **with traverse**, claims 1-14, 27, and 28 which read upon the alleged first species.

Accordingly, in view of all the reasons set forth above, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this election of species requirement. Also, an early indication of allowability is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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